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South-South cooperation for development

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High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation
Intersessional meeting
New York, 8 September 2015

Report on the intersessional meeting of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, 8 September 2015

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Chapter I

Decision adopted by the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its intersessional meeting

1. The High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation adopted the following decision at its intersessional meeting on 8 September 2015:

Decision 18/IM/1

The High-level Committee,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, in which the Assembly endorsed the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries,[1]

Reaffirming also the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Nairobi from 1 to 3 December 2009, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/222 of 21 December 2009,

Recalling its decisions 18/1 and 18/2,[2]

Noting also General Assembly resolution 69/239 of 19 December 2014,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its intersessional meeting on 8 September 2015 on further mainstreaming and coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system[2] and, in this regard, noting the need to take into account the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, as well as those arising from the evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme on its contribution to South-South and triangular cooperation during the period 2008-2011,[3]

Recognizing also that the Joint Inspection Unit, in its report on South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system,[4] provides recommendations to the United Nations development system on implementing measures to further strengthen the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and taking note of the accompanying note by the Secretary-General,[5]

Noting the results of the evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme on its contribution to South-South and triangular cooperation during the period 2008-2011,[3]

Noting also that the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation in the policies and strategic frameworks of the funds, programmes

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

[2] SSC/18/IM/1.

[3] See DP/2013/31.

[4] See JIU/REP/2011/3.

[5] See A/66/717/Add.1.

and specialized agencies of the United Nations system constitutes a positive effort,

Recognizing the importance of filling the current pending appointment(s) of regional representatives of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation,

Recognizing that further deliberation by all States on the options presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the institutional placement of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation[6] will be required before a decision is made,

Acknowledging the significance of South-South and triangular cooperation, in addition to North-South cooperation, and the potential of all three modalities to positively impact the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the importance of strengthening South-South cooperation, particularly within the United Nations development system, including the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation, in this context,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to present, during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, further information on the assignments and duties to be taken up by the Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation deriving from his appointment as the Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation with a view to supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to implement, as appropriate, those recommendations of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit[4] and the evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme on its contribution to South-South and triangular cooperation for the period 2008-2011[3] that remain unfulfilled;

3. *Also requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to make specific recommendations on additional support that United Nations system organizations and all States could provide to South-South and triangular cooperation, which could include, inter alia, voluntary secondment of staff and appointments of junior Professional officers to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, as well as measures to strengthen the system-wide efficiency and impact of the Office;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to align its work programme fully with its strategic framework, 2014-2017;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make necessary adjustments, as appropriate, to the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation,[7] in consultation with all States and organizations of the United Nations development system;

6. *Reaffirms* the mandate and the central role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as the focal point for promoting and facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation for development on a

[6] See SSC/18/3 and General Assembly resolution 69/239.
[7] See SSC/17/3.

global and United Nations system-wide basis, and requests the Secretary-General, noting that further deliberation by all States on the options presented in his report on measures to further strengthen the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation[8] will be required before a decision is taken on the idea of separating the Office for South-South Cooperation as operationally autonomous from the United Nations Development Programme, to present, as part of his comprehensive report to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its nineteenth session, to be held in 2016, in consultation with all States, the Office for South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme, a comprehensive proposal on concrete ways to enhance the role of and improve the impact of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme, including in the areas of financial, human and budgetary resources, including through the potential appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation, and, at the same time, recommending specific contributions of the United Nations Development Programme under such a change, with the view to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

7. *Reiterates* the request to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to establish a more formalized and strengthened inter-agency mechanism, coordinated by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, with a view to encouraging joint support to South-South and triangular initiatives, as well as sharing information on development activities and results achieved by various organizations through their respective business models in support of South-South and triangular cooperation; calls upon the United Nations development system to designate representational focal points to join the mechanism; and also requests the Administrator to give the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation the opportunity to be represented more regularly in strategic and coordination mechanisms of the United Nations Development Group when matters affecting South-South and triangular cooperation are being discussed;

8. *Also notes with satisfaction* some progress made on establishing the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team of the United Nations Development Group for a more formalized and strengthened inter-agency mechanism coordinated by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and on designating United Nations development system focal points to join the mechanism; and further reiterates its request to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to continue to give the Office the opportunity to be represented more regularly in strategic and coordinating mechanisms of the United Nations Development Group when matters affecting South-South and triangular cooperation are being discussed;

9. *Calls upon* the United Nations Development Programme and other relevant organizations of the United Nations development system to assist developing countries in implementing projects of South-South cooperation, including sharing best practices and experiences from the South, especially

[8] See SSC/18/3.

with least developed countries, upon request and in a manner consistent with their mandates and strategic plans;

10. *Invites* the United Nations development system to encourage the transfer of technologies on mutually agreed terms for the benefit of developing countries to address poverty eradication and sustainable development;

11. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on progress made in implementing the present decision to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its nineteenth session, as well as to inform the Committee of concrete steps taken to further strengthen South-South cooperation, particularly within the United Nations development system, including the strengthening of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, through improved allocation of resources.

Chapter II
High-level plenary segment

A. Opening of the meeting

2. At the opening segment of the meeting on the morning of 8 September 2015, the President of the eighteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, opened the meeting and made an introductory statement.

3. At the same opening segment, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) made a statement.

4. Also at the same segment, the Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation and Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation made a statement.

B. Introduction of the report

5. After the opening segment on 8 September 2015, the Committee considered items 2 and 3 of its agenda, on 8, 14 and 15 September. Member States reached consensus on a decision on 15 September 2015. The list of documents before the Committee at its intersessional meeting is contained in annex II to the present report.

6. The Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation and Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation introduced the report on further mainstreaming and coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (SSC/18/IM/1).

C. Discussion

7. In the context of the post-2015 development agenda and a rapidly evolving global development landscape, delegations reiterated their unwavering support for South-South and triangular cooperation and their potential to tackle the toughest development challenges, in particular poverty eradication, as outlined in the 2030 sustainable development goals, which the General Assembly was set to adopt in September 2015 at its high-level summit. They also drew attention to the importance that Member States gave to South-South, triangular and traditional North-South cooperation in the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda reached at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Busan Partnership Agreement reached at the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, and the partnership consensus of the First High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in 2014. Speaking on behalf of groups or as individual Member States or organizations, participants pointed to and welcomed the unrelenting, organic expansion of South-South and triangular initiatives throughout the world.

8. Member States and the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation also seized the occasion to commend and thank the outgoing Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation and Director of the United

Nations Office for South-South Cooperation for his commitment and energy in promoting and raising the profile of South-South cooperation within the United Nations system throughout his tenure. They also welcomed the new Director due to assume office in October 2015 and expressed their confidence in his ability to lead the Office at the present critical juncture.

9. In response to the report of the Secretary-General on further mainstreaming and coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (SSC/18/IM/1), Member States across the board expressed their strong support for the leadership and coordination role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in promoting the mainstreaming of South-South and triangular cooperation in the strategic plans and programmes of United Nations development system organizations. They highlighted the success of the Office in creating a space where Member States, United Nations system organizations, the private sector and non-governmental development actors could forge inclusive partnerships for effective development. While recognizing those successes, they urged the Office and the United Nations development system to step up their efforts to strengthen the Office and South-South cooperation overall. In that regard, one delegation drew attention to the finding in the report that in 2014, nearly 80 per cent of resident coordinators had received requests for South-South cooperation support and 20 of the 22 United Nations organizations working on South-South cooperation had confirmed its full integration into their strategic plans. It looked forward to the UNDP South-South cooperation strategy in September 2015.

10. Delegations regretted the late release of the report of the Secretary-General, however, and expressed concern that Member States had not been given sufficient time to review its contents. In that regard, a group of Member States stressed the critical importance that the group attached to South-South cooperation and urged that South-South cooperation not be marginalized in discussions in the United Nations on development. Throughout the meeting, a group of Member States, highlighting its efforts to be flexible and accommodating, appealed to colleagues to negotiate, with the final aim of reaching a consensus at the meeting, in particular on the issue of strengthening the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

11. The same group of Member States, noting the recommendations of the Secretary-General on improving United Nations system-wide governance, focus, coherence and coordination of South-South cooperation for greater development impact contained in the report (SSC/18/IM/1), stressed with concern that more should be done to make the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation fit for purpose to meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, the group drew attention to its previously expressed points that it had hoped the Secretary-General would address in his report, including: (a) a comprehensive proposal on how to scale up the financial, human and budgetary strength of the Office, including through the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation, while specifying the UNDP contribution; and (b) a progress update on the move to establish a more formalized, strengthened inter-agency mechanism, which the Office would coordinate, to foster United Nations development system joint support for South-South and triangular cooperation, including through information- and results-sharing and lessons learned.

12. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/239, the same group reiterated its call to strengthen the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation before making a decision on whether to create an independent Office separate from UNDP. The group also sought clarification as to why the Secretary-General in his report had given preference to strengthening the Office under the auspices of UNDP and what that implied in terms of its capacity-strengthening. Other delegations, however, supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to maintain the Office under the auspices of UNDP as the most efficient and sustainable model in the long term.

13. The same group also underscored its position that South-South cooperation was a manifestation of solidarity among the peoples and countries of the South that contributed to their national well-being, national and collective self-reliance, and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the soon-to-be-adopted sustainable development goals. The group stressed that it was the prerogative of the countries of the South, as indicated in the Nairobi outcome document, which the General Assembly endorsed in its resolution 64/222 subsequent to the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, to set the South-South cooperation agenda, guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit. It reiterated its position that South-South cooperation was not a substitute for but rather a complement to North-South cooperation. Furthermore, it stressed that: (a) official development assistance (ODA), the major financing source for many developing countries, should target the eradication of poverty in its multiple dimensions; (b) unfulfilled ODA commitments on unfinished Millennium Development Goals should be carried forward; and (c) the impact of the ODA deficit should be assessed within the implementation review of the 2002 Monterrey Consensus from the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2001 Doha Declaration from the World Trade Organization Fourth Ministerial Conference. The group underscored the importance of respecting the policy space of national Governments and the prerogative of national Governments to set regulations on public domestic financing in line with their own objectives and needs, which should not be confused with South-South cooperation objectives.

14. Member States stressed, across the board, that the focus of the international community was to determine how best to maximize the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation and foster the appropriate enabling environment for their success in the run-up to discussion on the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and in the light of Nairobi outcome document principles. In that regard, they pointed to a number of challenges, including the need to: (a) explore real South-South cooperation flows and how financial assistance, trade and investment were redefining the international architecture of development; (b) devise effective schemes for cooperation and exchange of experiences and lessons learned; and (c) promote inclusive associations, especially with academia, local government, parliamentarians, the private sector and foundations, in South-South planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

15. There was a call to focus on mobilizing much-needed resources through a new global partnership for South-South cooperation, in line with the Istanbul Programme

of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2011, the least developed countries, in particular, required an ambitious package to meet the challenges of the sustainable development goals and their unique vulnerabilities, including clear accountability for resources promised to the core resource base of organizations that should be predictable, unearmarked and without conditionality. The emerging economies as well, given their relevant and replicable experiences, had a special role to play in assisting least developed countries to meet their sustainable development goals targets, whether to fight poverty, diseases and conflict or to tackle public-health, climate-change and food-security challenges. Globally and regionally, least developed countries would also benefit from tariff reductions and the removal of market entry barriers for the better promotion of trade. South-South partnerships could promote productive capacity-building and investments in least developed countries as a way to strengthen their inclusion in global value chains, along with strengthened technical cooperation with traditional North-South partnerships.

16. Another group of Member States, noting again the quickly evolving global development landscape and its new financing dynamics, mixed with emerging and traditional donors, pointed to the need to move beyond the traditional development paradigm. That movement required greater openness to information exchange on lessons learned from different cooperation models; better understanding of advantages, complementarities and synergies; and more targeted South-South and triangular contributions to achieving development outcomes in the areas of technical assistance, capacity-building and financing for development. Extracting and building on those lessons and successes demanded better monitoring, evaluation and reporting instruments and tools to determine which of them would make the most efficient and effective contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, the group encouraged all development actors, including those engaged in South-South and triangular cooperation, to use and build on the development effectiveness principles identified in international forums, especially the 2011 Busan High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the 2014 High-level Meeting on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. One delegation represented at the ministerial level made a presentation about the planned international exhibition or EXPO-2017 "The Future Energy", to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, to promote the development and use of green technologies in the Commonwealth of Independent States and around the world. The representatives of a number of countries expressed interest in participating in the international exhibition.

Chapter III

Adoption of the decision and the report of the Committee and closure of the meeting

17. At the closure of the meeting, on 15 September, the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation adopted its decision and its report. In his closing statement, the President of the Committee requested the Rapporteur, Mario Oyarzabal (Argentina), to prepare the report of the intersessional meeting of the Committee with the support of the secretariat and to circulate the draft among Member States for their comments before finalizing it for submission to the Committee at its nineteenth session.

Chapter IV
Organizational matters

A. Date and place of the meeting

18. The Committee held its intersessional meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 8, 14 and 15 September 2015 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/239. The Committee concluded its work on 15 September rather than 8 September 2015, as previously planned, in order to allow sufficient time for negotiations.

B. Attendance

19. The intersessional meeting of the Committee was attended by representatives of States Members of the United Nations. Also in attendance were representatives of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The list of participants is contained in annex I to the present report.

C. Adoption of the agenda

20. The Committee adopted the agenda of its intersessional meeting on 8 September 2015 at the start of its deliberations.

Annex I

List of participants

States Members of the United Nations

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Austria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Zimbabwe

Non-member States maintaining a permanent observer mission at Headquarters

State of Palestine

Intergovernmental organization having received a standing invitation to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining a permanent office at Headquarters

European Union

United Nations Secretariat and other units

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Regional Commissions New York Office

United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Volunteers programme

Annex II

List of documents

Provisional agenda of the intersessional meeting of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (SSC/18/IM/L.1)

Report of the Secretary-General on further mainstreaming and coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (SSC/18/IM/1)